



# **Seminole County, Florida**

## **Local Infrastructure Funding Study**

### **Benchmark Poll**

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## Methodology:

### Survey Research

- Telephone survey research
- January 3-11 2014
- List Origin: Voter file matched with residential telephone listings
- Screen: registered to vote in subject county, likely voters and household resident screen
- Controls: data collection monitored; tabulation and analysis performed in-house by Barcelo&Company staff.
- Responses: county-wide sample,  $n=603$
- The margin of error for the entire sample is  $\pm 4.0\%$  (with a 95% confidence factor)
- The margin of error for sub-samples is greater.
- Approximately 25% of the sample was collected from cellular telephones



## Survey Instrument Flow:

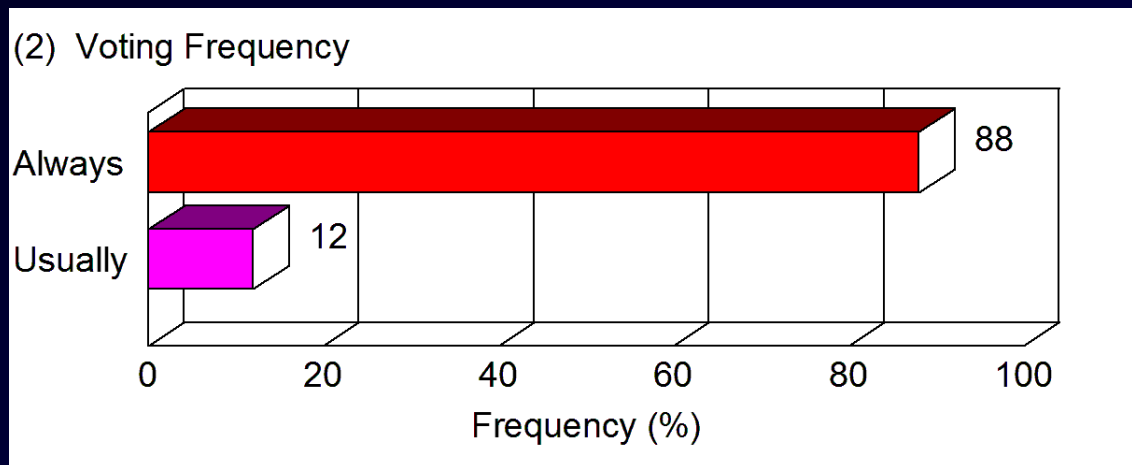
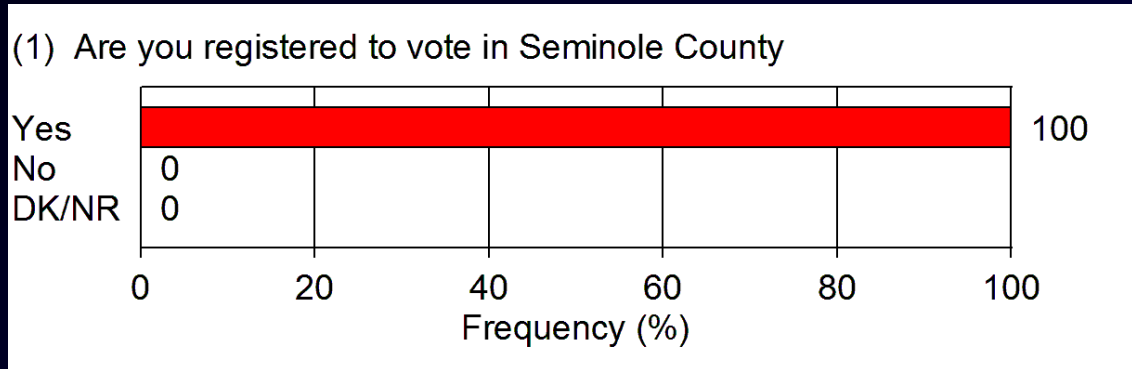
- Qualification items: voter registration and frequency
- Mood Questions:
  - right/wrong track direction
  - tax dollars well-spent by Co. Commission and School Board
- Name ID and approval series (organizational)
- Rate Commission and School Board on spending prior money
- Early Test: re-authorize one cent sales tax
- Agree/Disagree questions:
  - fiscal efficiency, neighborhood value, school quality, infrastructure needs
- Likelihood series
  - uses of proceeds, prior tax relief, local school renovation
- Late Test: re-authorize one cent sales tax
- Likelihood if known SB could then consider lowering property tax rate
- Demographics



88% of respondents to this survey are people who report themselves as "always" voting.

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1. Are you registered to vote in the Seminole County?
2. Would you describe yourself as someone who votes in every election, usually votes, sometimes votes, or hardly ever votes.

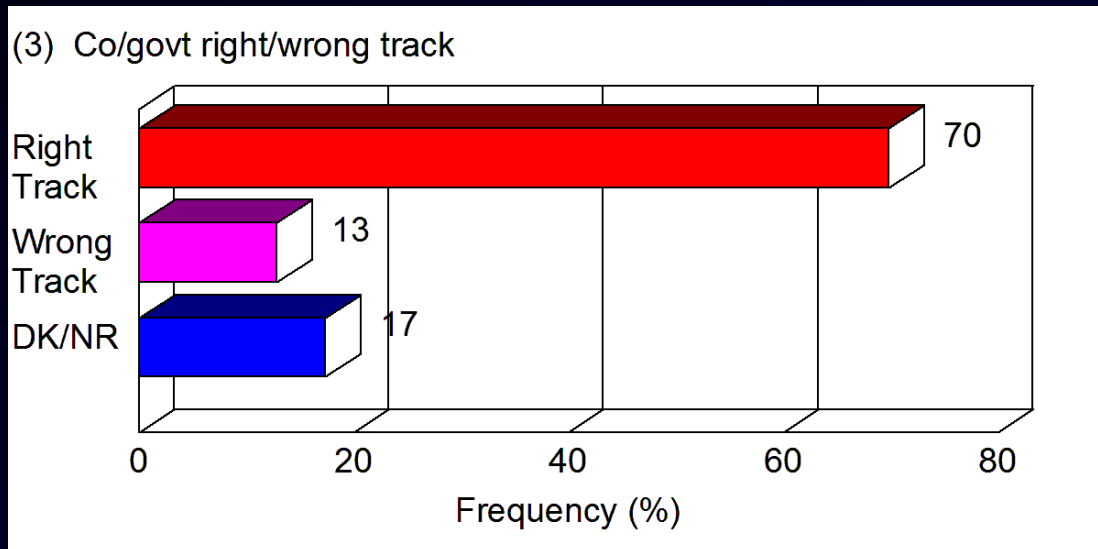




By a 5-to-1 margin, likely voters say that Seminole County government is on the right track.

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3. Would you say that Seminole County government is on the right track or the wrong track?

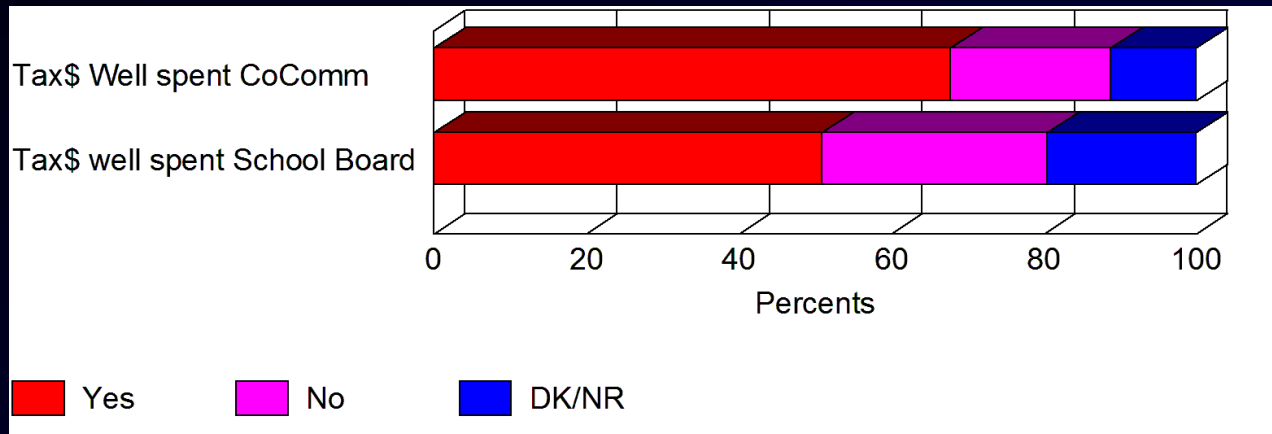


All primary demographic groups showed fewer than 20% “wrong track,” an unusual level of approval.



Strong majorities of voters believe that the Commission (68%) and the School Board (51%) do a good job spending taxpayer money.

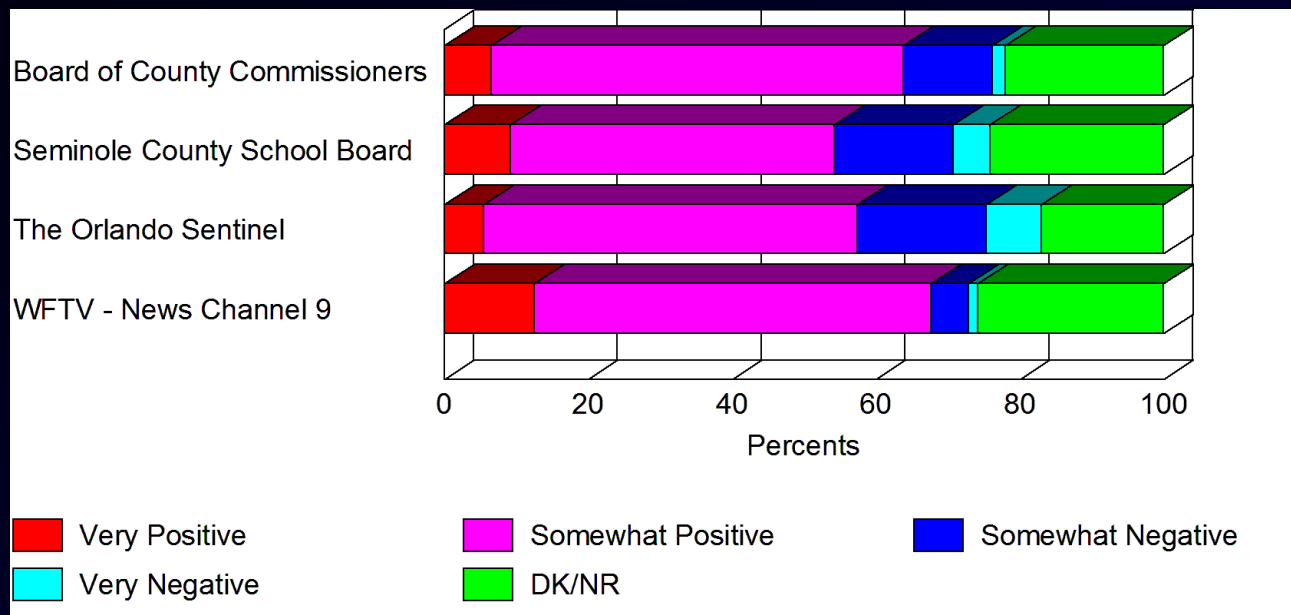
4. Do you think that your local tax dollars are generally well spent by the Seminole County Commission?
5. Do you think that your local tax dollars are generally well spent by the Seminole County School Board?



	Yes	No	DK/NR
Tax\$ Well spent County Comm	68%	21%	11%
Tax\$ well spent School Board	51%	30%	20%



The County Commission (64%) and the School Board (54%) both enjoy healthy approval ratings ... rare for a Florida county.

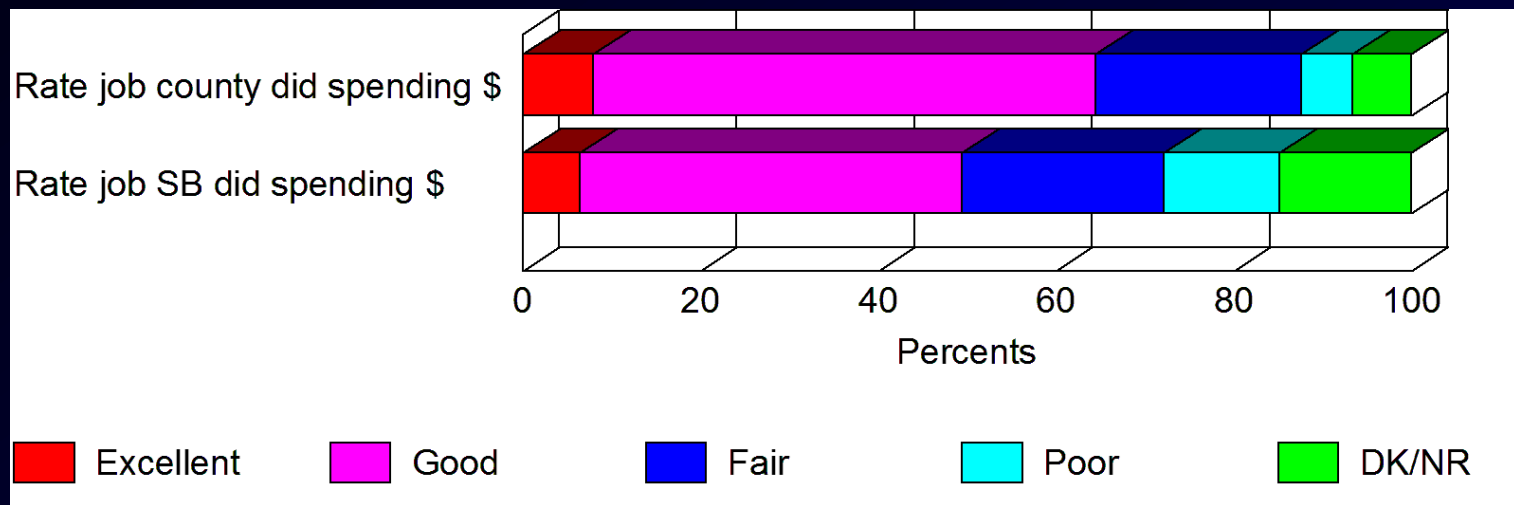


	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
Board of County Commissioners	7%	57%	12%	2%
Seminole County School Board	9%	45%	17%	5%
The Orlando Sentinel	5%	52%	18%	8%
WFTV - News Channel 9	13%	55%	5%	1%



The County Commission (65%) and the School Board (49%) also enjoy positive impressions on their spending from past tax proceeds. Commission District ranged from 63% - 69%.

10. From 1991 to 2011 Seminole County voters authorized a one-cent sales tax. The county used its portion to pay for public road improvements, infrastructure, storm-water improvements, recreational trails, and related needs. How would you rate the job the county did in spending this money?
11. Between 2001 and 2011, the Seminole County public schools was allocated a quarter of the proceeds to pay for public school construction and renovation. How would you rate the job the school district did in spending this money?



	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/NR
Rate job county did spending \$	8%	57%	23%	6%	7%
Rate job SB did spending \$	6%	43%	23%	13%	15%

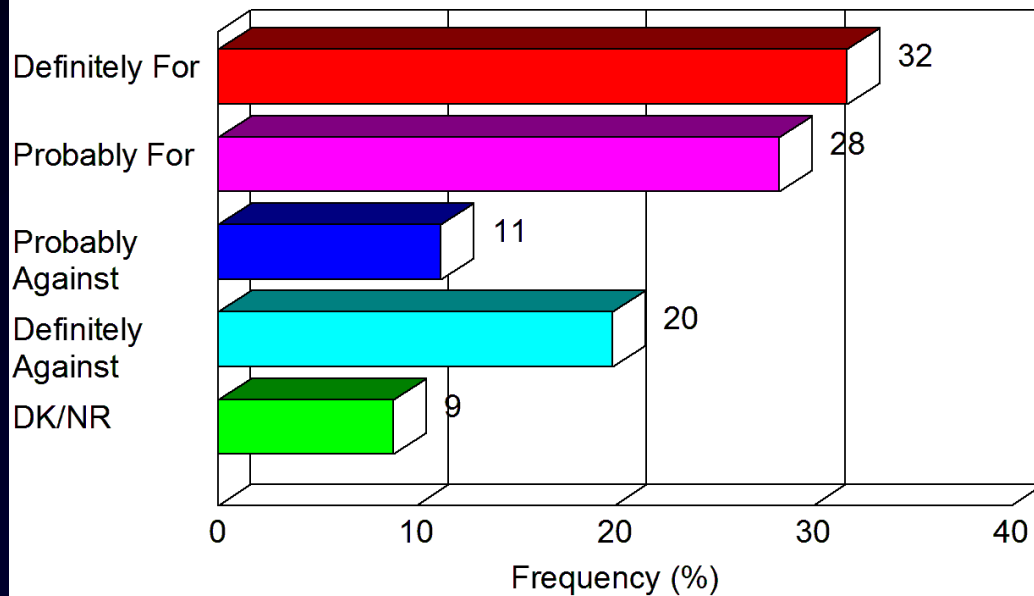




There is fairly low voter resistance (31% overall) in considering re-authorization of the sales tax.

- 12 Seminole County has ongoing needs for improvements to roadways, storm-water, and other infrastructure. Over the past two years this work has been done by using county sales tax reserves, but, going forward, these improvements will need re-authorized funding. There may be a vote next year to allow voters to re-authorize the one-cent local sales tax for transportation and infrastructure improvements. If the election were held today, would you vote for or against the tax?

(12) Uninformed Ballot Test

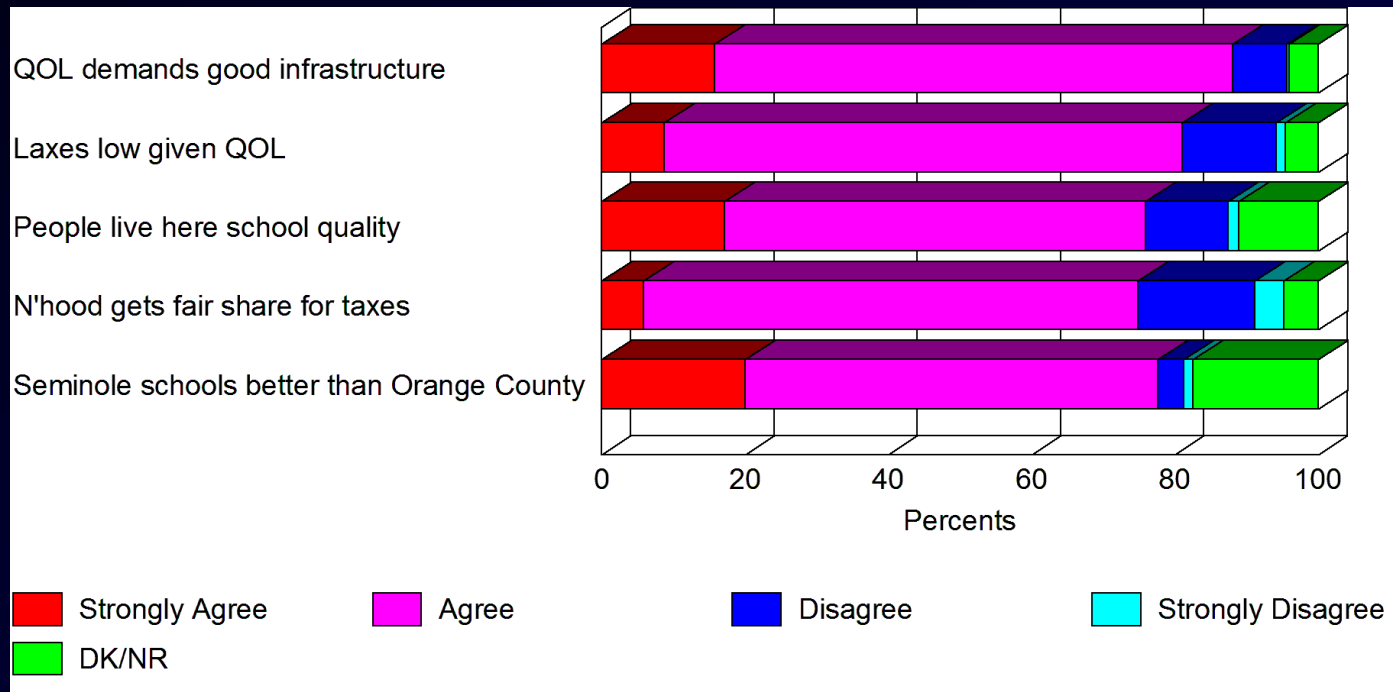


	For	Against	DK/NR
Overall	60%	31%	9%
White	58%	34%	9%
Black	51%	38%	11%
Hispanic	73%	19%	8%
Other	67%	23%	10%
DK/NR	29%	71%	0%
Democrat	65%	25%	10%
Republican	55%	37%	8%
Ind/Other/NPA	65%	27%	8%
DK/NR	41%	51%	8%
35 and Younger	67%	22%	11%
36 - 64	60%	32%	8%
65 and Older	53%	39%	8%
Under \$30k	51%	41%	8%
\$30-60k	65%	30%	6%
Over \$60k	69%	28%	3%
DK/NR	49%	34%	17%
Male	58%	34%	8%
Female	62%	28%	10%
District 1	58%	33%	9%
District 2	61%	31%	8%
District 3	57%	32%	11%
District 4	65%	29%	6%
District 5	58%	32%	10%



The primary predicates for consensus all enjoy strong agreement. The highest disagreement only comes to respondent approval in their neighborhood's "fair share" – and that is a very low 20%

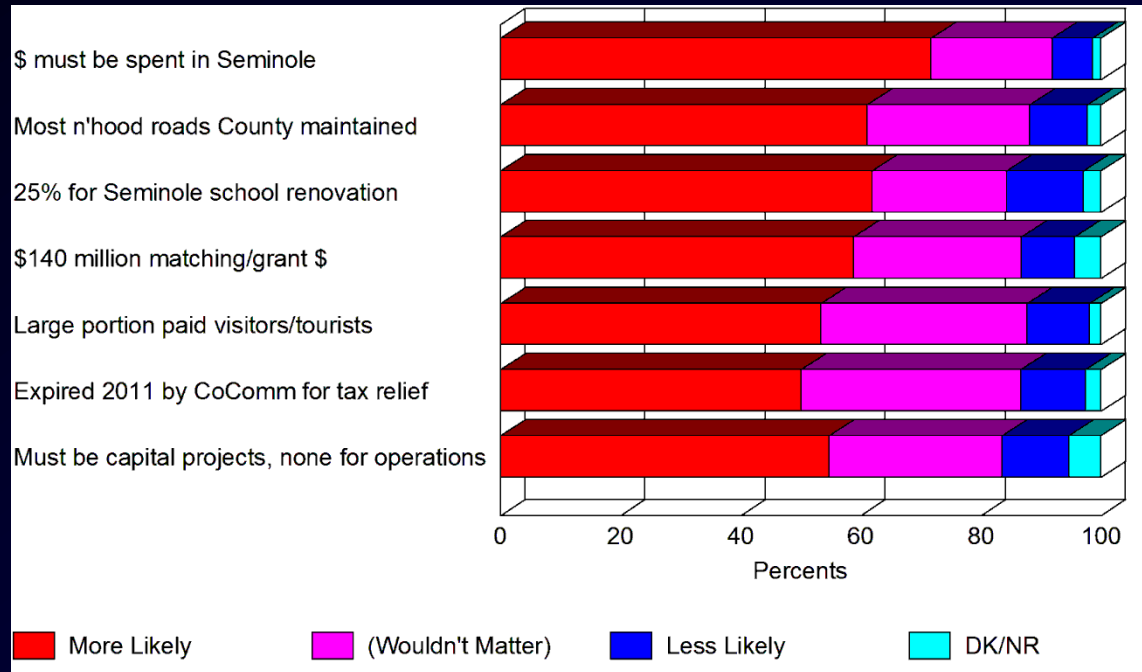
- 13 Local taxes in Seminole County are still reasonably low given our quality of life.
- 14 My neighborhood gets a fair share of services for the taxes we pay.
- 15 Our quality of life demands good transportation, storm water, and infrastructure improvements.
- 16 People choose to live here because of the quality of our schools.
- 17 The schools in Seminole County are better than the schools in Orange County



	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
QOL demands good infrastructure	16%	72%	8%	0%
Taxes low given QOL	9%	72%	13%	1%
People live here school quality	17%	59%	12%	1%
N'hood gets fair share for taxes	6%	69%	16%	4%
Seminole schools better than Orange County	20%	58%	4%	1%



- 18 All of the proceeds of the tax must be spent within Seminole County.
- 19 A large portion of the sales tax is paid by visitors and tourists.
- 20 So far we have been able to win over \$140 million in matching and grant funds because we use the sales tax for our local share.
- 21 All of the proceeds must be spent on capital projects; none of the money goes for operations.
- 22 Most neighborhood roadways are maintained by the County.
- 23 In 2011 the County Commission allowed the penny sales tax to expire to provide some tax relief for residents.
- 24 25% of proceeds will go to Seminole County Public Schools for school renovation.

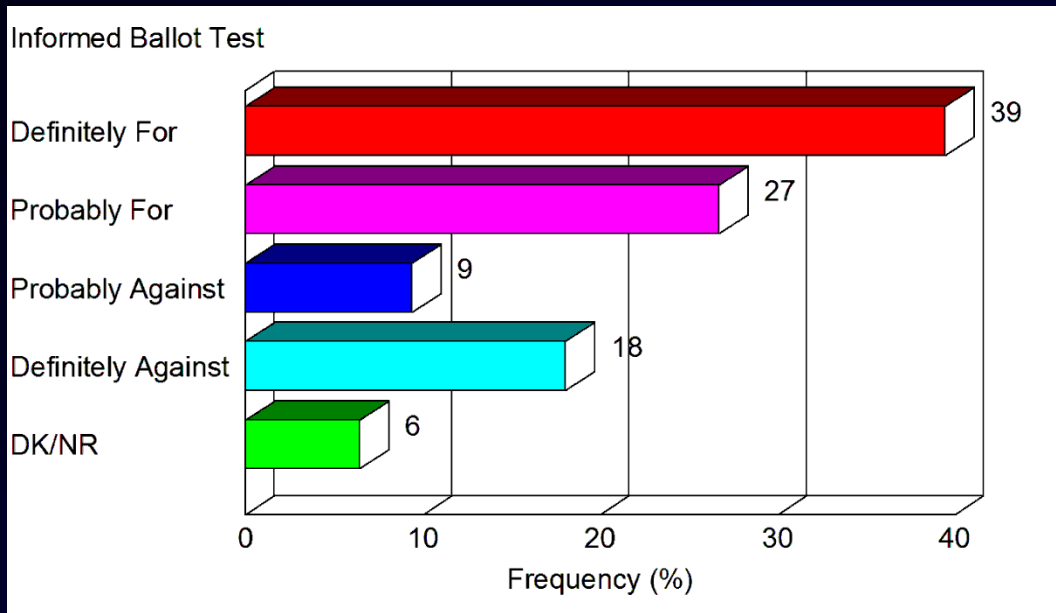


	More Likely	(Wouldn't Matter)	Less Likely
\$ must be spent in Seminole	72%	20%	7%
Most n'hood roads County maintained	61%	27%	10%
25% for Seminole school renovation	62%	22%	13%
\$140 million matching/grant \$	59%	28%	9%
Large portion paid visitors/tourists	53%	34%	10%
Expired 2011 by CoComm for tax relief	50%	37%	11%
Must be capital projects, none for operations	55%	29%	11%



The informed ballot test show consistently low pushback. Areas of potential concern are Republican voters, males, and voters over 65 years of age.

- 12 Again, There may be a vote next year to allow voters to re-authorize the one-cent local sales tax for transportation and infrastructure improvements. If the election were held today, would you vote for or against the tax?

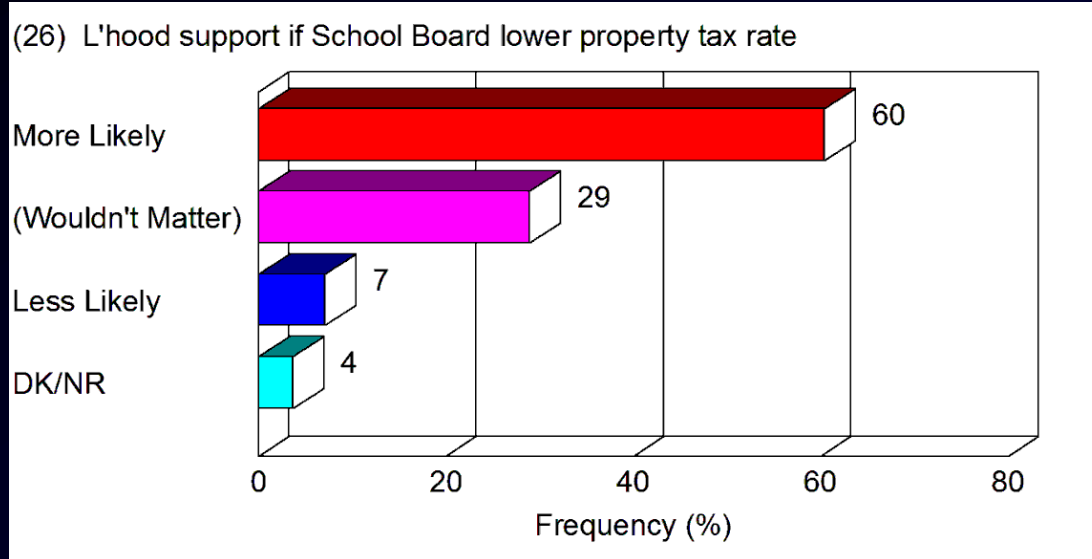


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District 5	65%	27%	8%



Republicans, voters 65 and older, and males all are more likely to support re-authorization when knowing that the School Board could consider lowering the property tax rate.

26 Would you be more or less likely to vote to re-authorize the sales tax if you know that the School Board could then consider lowering the property tax rate?



	More Likely	(Wouldn't Matter)	Less Likely
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## Findings:

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1. Strong belief in efficacy of local government :
  - a. Strong belief that county government in Seminole County is on the right track. (70%)
  - b. Strong belief that County Commission (68%) and School Board (51%) spend tax money wisely.
2. Positive approval ratings of local government generally:
  - a. County Commission (64%)
  - b. School Board (54%)
3. Confidence in spending propriety of the sales tax historically:
  - a. County Commission (65%)
  - b. School Board (49%)



## Findings:

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4. Categorical level approval of local governance by outcomes:
  - a. QOL demands infrastructure (88%)
  - b. Low taxes given QOL (81%)
  - c. School quality drives residency (76%)
  - d. Neighborhood fair share (75%)
  - e. Better schools than Orange (78%)



## Findings:

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5. Strong preference for sales tax characteristics:
  - a. \$ must be spent in-county (72%)
  - b. Most neighborhood roads county-maintained (61%)
  - c. 25% devoted to school renovation (62%)
  - d. \$140 matching/grants (53%)
  - e. Tax relief by County Commission (50%)
  - f. Capital projects only, no operations (55%)





## Findings:

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5. Strong performance on the informed ballot test:
  - a. 39% Definitely for
  - b. 27% Probably for
  - c. 9% Probably against
  - d. Only 18% Definitely against
6. Strong performance of the option of the School Board's potential re-visiting of the *ad valorem* tax
  5. 60% "more likely" vs. 7% less likely



## Conclusions:

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1. Voters start out in favor of the tax
  - a. Trust the County Commission and the School Board
  - b. Understand the need for QOL
  - c. Believe that the design is appropriate
2. Relatively low resistance without information (31%)
3. Low information with resistance (27%)
4. Almost 10-to-1 “more likely” with SB re-consideration of the *ad valorem* tax rate



## Starting Points for Consensus

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### **1. The money has been spent well:**

County Commission (65%) School Board (49%)

### **2. Our quality of life needs the funding :**

- a. QOL demands infrastructure (88%)
- b. Low taxes given QOL (81%)
- c. School quality drives residency (76%)
- d. Neighborhood fair share (75%)
- e. Better schools than Orange (78%)

### **3. The sales tax is designed the right way:**

- a. \$ must be spent in-county (72%)
- b. Most neighborhood roads county-maintained (61%)
- c. 25% devoted to school renovation (62%)
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Questions?